

Dear Committee,

February 27, 2016

I am writing to ask you to support SB 292.

I am a Greenwich resident and board certified behavior analyst (BCBA) who has been working with children with autism and related disabilities and their families for over 20 years. I work as a consultant in public and private schools across the state of Connecticut for the past 15 years. In 2012, I co-founded a collaborative pediatric clinic, The Waverly Group, also located in Greenwich, CT. Our clinic is a bustling place and we have a long waiting list for services. I tell you this to try to relay the incredible need for providers in CT. An unfortunate result of this need is unqualified and inadequately trained practitioners providing “ABA instruction.” It is imperative that we establish state licensure to protect children, families and schools from unqualified providers. I have witnessed first hand desperate families being exploited by therapists claiming expertise in the science of applied behavior analysis (ABA) only to compromise the trajectory of a child’s development due to lack of experience and expertise. I have committed my professional life to children with autism spectrum disorders. I have a vast educational background in applied behavior analysis and I was mentored by masters in the field. Our training is so specialized it is nearly impossible for families, and even school districts, to discern a minimum professional competency needed. State licensure would ensure protection in identifying practitioners with appropriate educational and supervisory experience.

In recent years, CT has done a terrific job increasing training opportunities within the state. There has been an increase in colleges that offer program leading to certification. We now have 548 board certified behavior analysts. However, board certification does not offer protection at the state level. Twenty four states have state licensure. This includes our neighbors of NY, MA and RI.

Another benefit of state licensure would be easier access for families to secure private insurance funding for ABA services. In my private practice, I watch families battle insurance agencies attempting to secure much needed therapy for their children. Raising a child with autism can be incredibly difficult. Dealing with insurance agencies is added insult. Licensure will allow families easier access to private insurance funding for ABA services. Let’s support families with children with autism and help them secure funding for their child’s therapy.

In summary, I feel strongly that licensure of behavior analysts is essential to protect children, families and schools and I ask you to vote YES to SB 292.

Thank you,
Alisa Slatin Rohdie, MA, BCBA
Board Certified Behavior Analyst
Certificant No. 1-04-2091

--

Alisa Slatin Rohdie, BCBA
The Waverly Group
Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Director